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# Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

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### U.S. Funds Innovative New Jimma University Program in Health Monitoring and Evaluation

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) – On Thursday, February 16, the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission, Janet Wilgus, traveled to Jimma to join Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Minister of Health; and Ato Fuad Ibrahim, State Minister of Education to mark the launch of a new program in Health Monitoring and Evaluation at Jimma University. The new program, made possible through funding from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, will allow students to work toward either a

Post Graduate one-year Diploma or a two-years



**U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission  
Janet Wilgus**

Masters of Science (MSc) degree.

Jimma University's Monitoring and Evaluation

Program is the first of its kind in Africa. It aims to produce qualified professionals in health monitoring and evaluation who will work in Ethiopia's public-health sector, building critical capacity and leadership and improving the coverage, quality, and effectiveness of health programs, particularly in the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tubercu-

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### People, Animals Treated by U.S. Medical Civic Action Team

The following article originally appeared February 2 in the U.S. Central Command/Coalition Newsletter.

Story By: USAF Tech. Sgt. Cindy Dorfner

GODE, Ethiopia, February 2, 2006 -- They arrived in small numbers, but their impact was huge. In just nine days, 23 members of the 96th



**Capt. Karin Landmann listens to the heartbeat of an Ethiopian gentleman Jan. 27, in Gode, Ethiopia. Photo: USA Sgt. Smedley**

Civil Affairs team made a difference to nearly 3,000 people and the owners of more than 15,000 animals in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia.

A crucial component of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, the 96th CA team took part in HOA's mission of "winning the hearts and

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## U.S. Funds Innovative New Jimma University Program . . .

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International program partners in this innovative program include Tulane University in the U.S. and the National School of Public Health of Brazil, working in close collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Health, the Ethiopian Public Health Association, the Regional Health Bureaus, and six Ethiopian Universities. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been the principal U.S. Gov-

ernment agency assisting in the program's implementation through the Emergency Plan.

President George W. Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is the largest commitment ever by a single nation toward an international health initiative -- a five year, 15 billion dollar, multifaceted approach to combating the disease in more than 100 countries around the world. Ethiopia is one of 15 Emergency Plan focus countries.

Working with program partners around the world, the Emergency Plan has made great progress, but its ultimate goal is to build quality healthcare networks and increase infrastructure capacity in host nations to sustain these efforts long into the future. The AIDS initiative is an exciting example of the way that "for people throughout the world, America is a partner for a better life," as President Bush said in his recent State of the Union address. ♦

## People, Animals Treated by U.S. Medical Civic Action Team . . .

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minds" through medical and veterinary treatment in Gode and other nearby villages Jan. 25-Feb. 2.

CJTF-HOA is made up of U.S. joint forces, the U.S. Department of State and more than two dozen coalition forces from around the globe. The group conducts operations and training to help host nations establish a secure environment and enable regional stability.

The idea for the medical civic action program, or MEDCAP, was to head back to Gode, a village the team visited in November. They hoped to help as many people as possible during the same visit on which a planned veterinary civic action program, or VETCAP, was scheduled.

The trip, which offered dewormer and vitamins to each animal and person seen, as well as medication specific to the circumstance, was a "complete success," said Master Sgt. John Abbe, an

Army reservist attached to the 96th CA team from the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion at Fort Dix, N.J.

"We made a difference in a lot of lives," Sergeant Abbe said.

One person who noticed a difference was a teenager from a nearby village who'd hurt himself. When he arrived, he had a piece of wood in his foot that had been there for two years.

Capt. Karin Landmann and Staff Sgt. Marion Cavanaugh, both Army reservists from the 404th, performed a procedure to remove the wood. The boy was overjoyed to finally have the object removed. Eventually the foot could have become so infected, the boy might have lost his leg, Captain Landmann said.

"A lot of times, we see what was a simple cut that has turned into a huge, horrible infection," said Captain Landmann. "Back home, we'd go to the emergency room, take

antibiotics and get better. That's not really an option for a lot of the people here. What starts out as a simple scratch, if left untreated, can cause someone to lose a limb from infection."

Aidan Abdullah, a local nurse who used his medical and English translation skills to help the Americans during the MEDCAP, said these missions are great for the local people.

"This is a good opportunity for the community in many ways," Mr. Abdullah said. "It's an excellent chance for them to get free medication and vitamins. For example, if someone needs medication for a urinary tract infection, it would cost 200 Ethiopian Birr (about \$23). Most people don't make 200 Birr in one month."

Mr. Abdullah said a lot of the children in the area are afflicted with worms, caused by drinking unsafe water.

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## People, Animals Treated by U.S. Medical Civic Action Team . . .

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"The first day people got the medication," he said. "The second day, the worms were out and they came by to say thank you. With the drought causing serious problems, I really believe if we didn't get this medication at this time, the situation would have become very serious."

Captain Landmann, a physician assistant in the Army and in civilian life, said helping people is what these missions are all about.

"I treated some families I'd treated in November. They looked healthier," said Captain Landmann. "The mothers were so happy their children were better. You could see in their eyes how appreciative they were that someone had taken the time to help their children."

Sergeant Abbe said one person walked 11 kilometers to thank the team for seeing his family and to tell them his children were already feeling better.

The group didn't just focus on people's health, but also reached out to the livelihood of the area -- livestock. During a VETCAP, the goal is to improve the overall economy of the area, said Army reservist Maj. Jim Riche, a veterinarian in both his military and civilian professions.

"By attempting to improve the overall health of the herds, you improve the value of the animals to the owner," Major Riche said. Dewormer and vaccinations could potentially increase the body weight by 10 percent in six months by removing internal parasites, which

"An elder in one village thanked us and said that there wasn't an animal within a 30-kilometer radius without a blue stripe down its back," Sergeant Abbe said. "It was really neat -- I don't think there were any we missed."



**U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Chuck McDermott administers topical deworming medication during a Veterinary Civil Actions Program (VETCAP) at Adelaie, Ethiopia, January 30, 2006. Photo By: USAF Staff Sgt. Nic Raven**

Major Riche said he's happy his team was able to help.

"We've made relationships out here," he said. "Farmers don't have access to any veterinary care, so they may not have a clear understanding of what we're actually doing to, or for, their animals. So for them to let us treat their animals -- their livelihood -- shows great trust. If we can continue to gain their trust and continue to improve

steal nutrition from the animal, he added.

With the current drought affecting a large part of the region, Major Riche said farmers must take their livestock farther to look for food on which to graze. Traveling farther means using more energy, which is why it's so important to have a healthy herd, the doctor said.

Since villagers brought their similar-looking camels, goats, donkeys and cows by the herd, things could have gotten confusing quickly. The solution was marking each animal with a temporary blue dye as it was getting vaccinated.

their lives, we can make a difference."

Captain Landmann agreed.

"It doesn't matter how hard we have to work or what time we have to get up," she said. "If we help just one person a day, it makes a difference."

(end byliner)

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## United States Funds New Partnership for Africa's Development

Washington -- Reflecting President Bush's commitment to expand U.S. cooperation with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) February 13 announced the award of a \$361,476 grant to the NEPAD Secretariat to help it prepare a guide for investors in Africa and move three regional infrastructure projects toward implementation.

USTDA Director Thelma J. Askey and professor Firmino Mucavele, chief executive, signed the grant agreement in Johannesburg, South Africa, on behalf of the U.S. government and NEPAD, respectively. NEPAD is an initiative spearheaded by African leaders in 2001 to create a new vision and an integrated socioeconomic development framework for renewal of the continent.

The USTDA grant award follows a June 2005 meeting between President Bush and South African President Thabo Mbeki in which Bush committed U.S. support to advance NEPAD's vision of improved governance, better economic management and regional integration.

These strategies, a USTDA press release notes, are consistent with the economic development goals

of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which provides beneficiary countries in sub-Saharan Africa with preferential access to the U.S. market.

NEPAD has selected AfricaGlobal Partners LLC of Washington to deliver the USTDA-funded technical assistance. In addition to the preparation of a NEPAD guide for investors, the technical assistance program will provide project pro-



**Thelma J. Aske**  
**USTDA Director**

motion services related to three priority projects: the Benin/Togo/Ghana Power Interconnect Project, the COMESA Telecom (COMTEL) Project and the Addis Ababa Dry Port Project.

If implemented, the USTDA document added, these projects will help establish essential infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa to further the objectives of AGOA.

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The agency

funds various forms of technical assistance, feasibility studies, training, orientation visits and business workshops that support the development of a modern infrastructure and a fair and open trading environment.



**Professor**  
**Firmino Mucavele**

USTDA's strategic use of foreign assistance funds to support sound investment policy and decision-making in host countries creates an enabling environment for trade, invest-

ment and sustainable economic development. In carrying out its mission, USTDA gives emphasis to economic sectors that could benefit from U.S. exports of goods and services.

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## U.S. Ex-Im Bank Renews, Expands Insurance Initiative in Africa

Washington -- As part of its growing presence in Africa, the U.S. Export-Import Bank has renewed its Short-Term Insurance Pilot Program for Africa (STIPP) for three years, beginning March 31, with an authorization limit of \$100 million.

The bank announced the move in a February 10 press release while also noting that after reviewing the eligibility status of all sub-Saharan African nations, it had added five countries -- Burundi, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone -- to the program for financing in the public and private sectors.

At the same time, improvements in country conditions enabled three nations -- Chad, Equatorial Guinea and Ghana -- to graduate from the program and become eligible under Ex-Im Bank's routine cover policies for medium-term financing in both the public and private sectors.

Ghana also is eligible for Ex-Im

Bank long-term financing, the document said. With these changes, 28 African countries now are eligible for financing under STIPP, bringing to 44 the total number of African countries in which Ex-Im Bank programs are available.

The Africa Pilot Program provides short-term coverage in countries where Ex-Im Bank is otherwise not open. It helps businesses in participating countries buy U.S.-made goods and services, including spare parts, raw materials and agricultural commodities. Under the program, Ex-Im Bank can insure short-term export credit transactions involving various payment terms, including open account terms.

"We are delighted with the growth of Ex-Im Bank programs in this region," said James H. Lam-bright, Ex-Im Bank president and acting chairman. "Our commitment to expand support for U.S. exports to Africa not only benefits

U.S. jobs, but also facilitates African economic growth."

Ex-Im Bank in 2006 marks its 71st year of helping finance the sale of U.S. exports, primarily to emerging markets throughout the world, by providing loan guarantees, export credit insurance and direct loans.

In fiscal year 2005 Ex-Im Bank authorized nearly \$14 billion in transactions, supporting almost \$17.9 billion in U.S. exports. This represented 3,128 transactions, of which 2,617, or more than 80 percent, directly benefited small businesses.

More information on the Export-Import Bank (<http://www.exim.gov/>) is available on its Web site.

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## U.S. Muslim Group Launches Education Effort . . .

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Awad said CAIR has been working to mediate the crisis between the Danish government and Danish Muslim groups.

"When we met with the Danish ambassador, we proposed an initiative by American Muslims, a goodwill initiative to have some breakthrough in this crisis," Awad said.

Awad said that the Danish government, while lacking the power to force a newspaper to issue an apology, could show respect for Muslims worldwide by

expressing its condemnation of the cartoons.

CAIR also offered to send a delegation to Denmark to meet with Danish Muslim groups and media and share the experience of American Muslims in dealing with defamation and stereotyping, Awad said. "We've dealt with them in a diplomatic way," he said.

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## U.S. Skating Champion Donates Olympic Winnings to Darfur Refugees

By Helen I. Rouse  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. speed skater Joey Cheek, who won the Olympic gold medal February 13 in the 500-meter speedskating event at Torino, Italy, is using his winnings to help African refugees.

Cheek surprised many by announcing that he will donate the \$25,000 he will receive from the U.S. Olympic Committee for having won the gold medal to a charitable organization that will use the money to benefit refugees from the Darfur region of western Sudan.

"In the Darfur region of Sudan, there have been tens of thousands killed," he told reporters at the start of his post-race news conference.

"My government labeled it a genocide, and so I will be donating money specifically to a program to help [Sudanese] refugees in Chad, where there are over 60,000 children who have been displaced from their homes."

He called on corporate sponsors of the Olympics to match his donation.

The money will go to the organization Right to Play, which uses sports to advance development, health and peace. The organization, supported by former Olympic, Paralympic and professional athletes

around the world, is directed by famed Norwegian speed skater Johann Olav Koss.

According to a Washington Post report, Cheek as a teenager admired Koss, who started a charitable movement among athletes by

entire world, and I've met amazing friends. But it's honestly a pretty ridiculous thing: I mean, I skate around on ice in tights.

"So if you keep in perspective, I've trained my whole life for this, but it's not that big a deal. But

because I've skated well, and because I know I have two seconds of microphone time, I have the ability to hopefully raise some awareness and raise some money and maybe, God willing, put some kids on a path that I've been blessed with."

The 500-meter sprint in which Cheek won the gold is the shortest event in Olympic speedskating. In it, competitors race 1.25 laps, in pairs, around an ice oval,

then repeat the race after less than an hour's break. The fastest combined time is used to determine the medal winners.

The \$25,000 cash bonus was awarded under the USOC's "Operation Gold" program, under which U.S. medalists in the Olympic Games receive \$25,000 for a first place finish, \$15,000 for second place and \$10,000 for third place.

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**Joey Cheek of the U.S. skates to win the men's speed skating 500 metres race at the Torino 2006 Winter Olympic Games at Oval Lingotto in Turin, Italy February 13, 2006. REUTERS/Max Rossi**

donating his winnings from the 1994 Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway, to buy sports equipment for children in the war-torn East African nation of Eritrea.

Cheek said that if Sudan "ever gets stabilized," he hopes to be able to start programs for internally displaced refugees within the country.

Reflecting on his action, as quoted in the Post report, Cheek said: "It's empowering to think of someone other than myself. What I do is just great fun. I love what I do; it's a great job. I've seen the

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## Number of Sudan Peacekeepers Might Need To Be Doubled, Bush Says

By Stephen Kaufman  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- President Bush February 17 said more troops are needed to stem the violence in the Darfur region of Sudan, speculating that double the current number of peacekeepers will be required to bring security to the area.

Speaking in Tampa, Florida, Bush said he is working with international leaders such as U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to encourage more troops "probably under the United Nations," and including a role by NATO.

"It's going to require, I think, a NATO stewardship planning, facilitating, organizing, probably double the number of peacekeepers that are there now in order to start bringing some sense of security," Bush said.

The president said he hopes the northern and southern Sudanese people can negotiate a peace agreement that will allow the southern Sudanese to "get their lives back in order, [and] get the oil money moving that was guaranteed to them."

Regarding the War on Terror and U.S. military operations in Iraq, Bush called for patience on the part of the American people, saying they should not be

safe haven.

The president also discussed the U.S. economy, including energy sources, relations with Muslim countries and immigration.

Prior to his remarks, the president received a briefing from military commanders at U.S. Central Command at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa concerning ongoing operations in the War on Terror. The White House also released a fact sheet on Bush's visit.

The fact sheet (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/re->



President George W. Bush, seen here during a speech in Tampa, Florida on 17 February

"discouraged about setbacks," and that he has a plan to achieve victory.

"Victory is a state, a democracy that can sustain itself and defend itself and join America in fighting the war on terror. That's the goal of victory. That's the definition of victory," he said.

The broader U.S. strategy against terrorists, he said, is to defeat them overseas to avoid facing them at home, and to work with international partners to deny them

leases/2006/02/20060217-2.html) on the president's briefing in Tampa is available on the White House Web site.

*(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦*

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## Bush Requests Additional \$72.4 Billion for Fiscal Year 2006

Washington -- President Bush sent a \$72.4 billion emergency supplemental funding request for fiscal year 2006 to Congress February 16 to pay for the ongoing war on terrorism, urgent humanitarian aid, and other activities, such as promoting democracy in Iran.

In a letter submitted to House Speaker Dennis Hastert along with the budget request, the president said the new money would be used for "urgent, unanticipated needs to help relieve human suffering associated with a number of humanitarian crises, including Sudan and other parts of Africa, assistance for refugees, and the costs of humanitarian relief and reconstruction efforts in response to the devastating earthquake in Pakistan."

The president's letter says the request also would be used to create political and economic stability in post-conflict areas. As an example, a White House fact sheet on the supplemental budget indicates that \$423 million is being sought for U.S. military commanders to continue to fund small relief and reconstruction projects in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Bush said the administration's request urgently is needed to advance democracy in Iraq as well as to fight the insurgency there, in part, by training and equipping Iraqi security forces "so that they

can defend their sovereignty and freedom."

It would be used to help rebuild Afghanistan and to train and provide equipment for Afghan security forces, the president said, so that country can "continue to take control of its democratic future."

The fiscal year 2006 supplemental budget request seeks \$65.3 billion for the Defense Department to fund a variety of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, with the remainder to be spent by the State Department to boost its diplomatic presence in those two countries and by other agencies to fund programs including classified intelligence activities, such as \$1.7 billion for military intelligence.

Highlights of the request include:

Over \$500 million for humanitarian and peacekeeping requirements in Sudan, with \$125 million to be used for African food emergencies and \$24 million to be spent to assist Liberian refugees returning home;

\$32 million to upgrade Afghanistan's northern power grid;

\$126 million for humanitarian relief and reconstruction efforts in the wake of Pakistan's devastating earthquake;

\$193 million for counter-

narcotics efforts in Afghanistan;

\$3.4 million for Afghanistan to help with refugees from Pakistan;

\$1.9 billion to find ways to detect and defeat improvised explosive devices;

\$3.7 billion to prepare Iraqi security forces for independent operations; and

\$75 million for greater outreach and information and cultural exchanges with Iran.

The text (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/02/20060216-6.html>) of the president's letter, a fact sheet (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/02/20060216-11.html>) on the supplemental budget request and transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/02/20060216-6.html>) of a briefing by officials from the Office of Management and Budget and the State and Defense department are available on the White House Web site.

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## Foreign Affairs Budget Would Foster Freedom, Democracy, Rice Says

By David Anthony Denny  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The Bush administration's proposed budget for fiscal year 2007 aims to support a foreign policy "devoted to the creation of a more hospitable environment for the forward march of freedom and democracy," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice says.

The secretary was testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the president's proposed \$31.9 billion budget for international operations for fiscal year 2007, which begins October 1. The proposal submitted to Congress would increase the fiscal 2007 spending approximately \$3 billion from the amount Congress approved for fiscal year 2006.

In opening remarks at February 15 hearing, Rice said that democratic processes around the world "must be supported."

"Democratic transitions are indeed difficult," and especially in the Middle East, Rice said. "But people have to have their voice, and the United States must stand for a principle that democratic processes, no matter how difficult, are always preferable to the false stability of dictatorship."

Rice also said the United States congratulates the Palestinian people for holding a January 25 election "largely free of violence and largely believed to be free and

fair."

"The Palestinian people voted for change," Rice continued. "We believe that they voted for change against long-term corrupt practices that had made their lives difficult and their progress difficult." Now, she said, the winning side -- the political wing of the terrorist group Hamas -- "has both an obligation



Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, seen here testifying before the Senate on 15 February

and a choice ... to fulfill the Palestinian people's desire for a better life."

Hamas must recognize Israel's right to exist, disarm as a militia and renounce violence, she said, "because only under those circumstances can there be true international support for ... the next Palestinian government."

### IRAN

Turning to Iran, the secretary characterized that regime's policies as destabilizing, in that they "support terrorism and violent extremism."

The Iranian regime has "ideological ambitions and policies that are, frankly, a challenge to the kind of Middle East that I think we would all like to see -- one of tolerance, one of democracy," she said.

The United States will actively confront the policies of this Iranian regime while trying "to support the aspirations of the Iranian people for freedom," Rice said. She charged the Iranian government with "toxic statements and confrontational behavior," especially regarding its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

"No one wants to deny the Iranian people or the Iranian nation civil nuclear power," Rice said, noting the U.S. diplomacy has resulted in a decision of the International Atomic En-

ergy Agency Board of Governors to refer the issue of Iran's nuclear program to the United Nations Security Council. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/Feb/05-28107.html>).)

The United States will continue to develop "sensible security measures" such as the Proliferation Security Initiative "to try and deny to regimes like Iran, North Korea and others the materials for covert programs that threaten the international system." (See Arms Control and Non-Proliferation (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/>))

(Continued on page 12)

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## U.S. Muslim Group Launches Education Effort on Islam's Prophet

By Phillip Kurata  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- A prominent American Muslim civic group is launching a campaign to educate the public in the United States and Canada about the life of Prophet Muhammad, the founder of the Islam, in response to the controversy caused by insulting cartoons published in several European countries.

"We wanted to turn this controversy of misunderstanding and confrontation into an opportunity of education and learning about Prophet Muhammad," the executive director of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) Nihad Awad said in Washington February 14.

CAIR and its independent sister organization in Canada -- CAIR-CAN -- are distributing free-of-charge copies of a book chronicling the life of Muhammad and a documentary film, Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet, about the prophet's life and how his teachings affect people's lives today, Awad said.

The CAIR materials are intended to help Muslim communities hold public discussions, open mosque events, panel discussions, essay contests and interfaith gatherings to increase understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims. The CAIR Web site (<http://www.cair.com/>) carries information on ordering the book and documentary and planning outreach activities.

"We decided to declare the year 2006 the year of learning about

Prophet Muhammad and his life," Awad said. "Hopefully through this effort we will reduce the possibility of future conflict and confrontation over cartoons that might be seen as innocuous to some people but can be seen as deeply offensive to 1.5 billion Muslims over the world," Awad said. He said the campaign is not intended to convert, evangelize or proselytize, but rather to spread under-



**Nihad Awad, Executive Director of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR)**

standing and information about Islam.

CAIR is trying to develop a "consensus that religious symbols and beliefs should not be the target of satire and cartoons that offend people," Awad said.

Courtney Erwin of the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington endorsed the CAIR initiative.

"It is hoped that this campaign will help soothe tensions and redi-

rect energy away from outrage and violence and toward understanding and respect," Erwin said. "It will hopefully be a step in the direction of creating a beloved community, in the words of Martin Luther King Jr., creating a just society where people celebrate the differences because people understand each other and find unity in that understanding," she added.

Imam Joahri Abdul-Malik, representing the coordinating council of Muslim organizations in Washington and the Dar Al Hijrah Islamic Center in suburban Washington, said his council is working to initiate discussions with members of different faiths.

"I would ask every local community -- Christians, and Muslims and Jews -- to spend an evening together, watch the film, organize discussions groups, so that at the end of the day, we can say that we have come to know each other," the imam said.

CAIR says the U.S. government and media have dealt with the issue in a balanced and mature manner.

"Our government responded in a very balanced way, supporting freedom of expression, but also calling for responsible actions by journalists. The media have been very good in the United States" largely by refraining from reprinting the cartoons, said CAIR spokesman Ibrahim Hooper. "The administration's response in this particular instance was quite helpful," he added.

*(Continued on page 5)*

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## U.S. Has Prosecuted Abuses Shown in Newly Published Photos

Americans have already been convicted and sentenced for up to 10 years in prison for abuses shown in newly published photographs of the Abu Ghraib detention facility in Iraq, says a U.S. diplomat who called the acts in the photos "sickening."

"These are not from a new incident, but are more photographic evidence of the abuse that came to light in January 2004," Ambassador Julie Finley told the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on February 16. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=February&x=20060215172829idy-beekcm0.7068903&t=is/is-latest.html>).)

"The acts depicted in these photos are crimes and violations of the policies of the United States," Finley told the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, Austria. "Individuals who participate in such behavior have been and will be held accountable. These kinds of acts are as sickening to Americans as they are to people around the world." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Sep/29-522690.html>).)

President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice have both made clear that the United States does not tolerate torture or inhumane treatment of detainees in its custody. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Dec/06-129768.html>).)

The previously unpublished photographs and videos were aired Feb-

ruary 15 on Australian public television. However, the images only show additional details of incidents already made public. When news organizations first showed images of detainee abuse at Abu Ghraib in early 2004, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld testified to Congress that other unpublished images existed, and he allowed members of Congress to review the unpublished images.

The United States treats allegations of abuse seriously, Finley said. More than 466 criminal investigations have been conducted, and more than 100 individuals have been held accountable for detainee abuse, she said.

"At Abu Ghraib, specifically, more than 25 individuals – officers and enlisted – have been held accountable for criminal acts and other unauthorized conduct," Finley said. One individual was sentenced to 10 years in prison, another to eight years and another to three years, Finley said. The colonel in charge of the military intelligence brigade operating Abu Ghraib in late 2003 and early 2004 was relieved of command, reprimanded and fined.

"It is important to remember that it was a United States soldier who disclosed the photographs in January 2004 because of his concern that these acts were wrong," Finley said. "The military chain of command immediately launched an investigation before this matter ever became public."

Following is the full text of Finley's statement to the OSCE Permanent Council:

(begin text)

United States Mission to the OSCE  
Statement on New Pictures from Abu Ghraib

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley to the Permanent Council, Vienna

February 16, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Yesterday, Australian public television aired previously unpublished photographs and video clips of prisoner abuse by United States soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison. These are not from a new incident, but are more photographic evidence of the abuse that came to light in January 2004.

The acts depicted in these photos are crimes and violations of the policies of the United States. Individuals who participate in such behavior have been and will be held accountable. These kinds of acts are as sickening to Americans as they are to people around the world.

The President of the United States has made clear that United States policies forbid, and we will not tolerate torture or inhumane treatment of detainees in its custody.

United States service members receive clear instructions and training to treat detainees humanely.

The United States treats allegations of abuse seriously, and the Department of Defense has taken appropriate action against those found to have committed abuse against a detainee.

More than 466 criminal investiga-

*(Continued on page 12)*

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## Foreign Affairs Budget Would Foster Freedom, Democracy . . .

(Continued from page 9)  
[international\\_security/arms\\_control.html](#).)

The United States will also work to use money already approved by Congress for fiscal year 2006 "to develop support networks for Iranian reformers, political dissidents and human rights activists," Rice said. She added that the administration planned to seek \$75 million in supplemental funds in the fiscal 2006 budget to support democracy in Iran. (See also "Rice To Request \$75 Million To Promote Democracy in Iran

Rice said that money would enable the United States to:

- Increase support for democracy and improve U.S. radio broadcasting,
- Begin satellite television broadcasting,
- Increase the contacts between our peoples through expanded fellowships and scholarships for Iranian students, and
- Bolster U.S. public diplomacy efforts.

"In addition, I will be notifying that we plan to reprogram funds in 2007 to support the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people," she said.

Another U.S. goal for Iran is to expand educational exchanges with young Iranians. In the 1970s, 200,000 Iranians studied in the United States, Rice said, adding that just 2,000 do so now. "We must change this and we will," Rice said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jan/19-941422.html>).)

A transcript (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/61262.htm>) of Rice's opening remarks to the Senate panel and a related fact sheet (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/61268.htm>) are available on the State Department Web site. ♦

## U.S. Has Prosecuted Abuses Shown in Newly Published Photos . . .

(Continued from page 11)

tions have been conducted and more than 100 individuals have been held accountable for alleged detainee abuse (i.e., court-martials, confinement for a term of years, non-judicial punishments, reprimands and/or separation from the service).

At Abu Ghraib specifically, more than 25 individuals -- officers and enlisted -- have been held accountable for criminal acts and other unauthorized conduct. One individual was sentenced to 10 years in prison, another to 8 years and another to 3 years. The Colonel in charge of the Military Intelligence Brigade operating at Abu Ghraib was relieved of command, reprimanded, and fined.

The Department of Defense has conducted a dozen major reviews, assessments, or investigations re-

lated to detention operations, including several high-level reviews of the events specifically at Abu Ghraib:

More than 2,800 interviews have been conducted.

More than 16,000 pages of information have been produced.

More than 31 Congressional hearings and 45 staff briefings have been held.

A relatively small number of people have engaged in acts such as those depicted in these photos. They do not reflect the dedicated service of more than 830,000 service members deployed in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

It is important to remember that it was a United States soldier who

disclosed the photographs in January 2004 because of his concern that these acts were wrong. The military chain of command immediately launched an investigation before this matter ever became public.

We're not perfect, but we believe in the rule of law. When soldiers or civilians break the law, they will be held accountable for their actions and judged appropriately according to our laws.

We will not rest until each and every individual responsible for these acts is brought to justice.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(end text)

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U. S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

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## U.S. Citizens Fearlessly Communicate with Their Head of State

By Michael Jay Friedman  
Washington File Staff Writer

Few exchanges illustrate the high value the United States places on free speech as the centuries of correspondence directed by common citizens to the president of the United States.

One letter, handwritten on a two-by-four block of wood, is insistent: "Immediate action must be taken." A telegram is harsher: "You are a sell-out a jackass and a dolt." A third missive, scrawled on a sheet of loose-leaf paper, is more positive: "I like your courage .... I wish you would write me back."

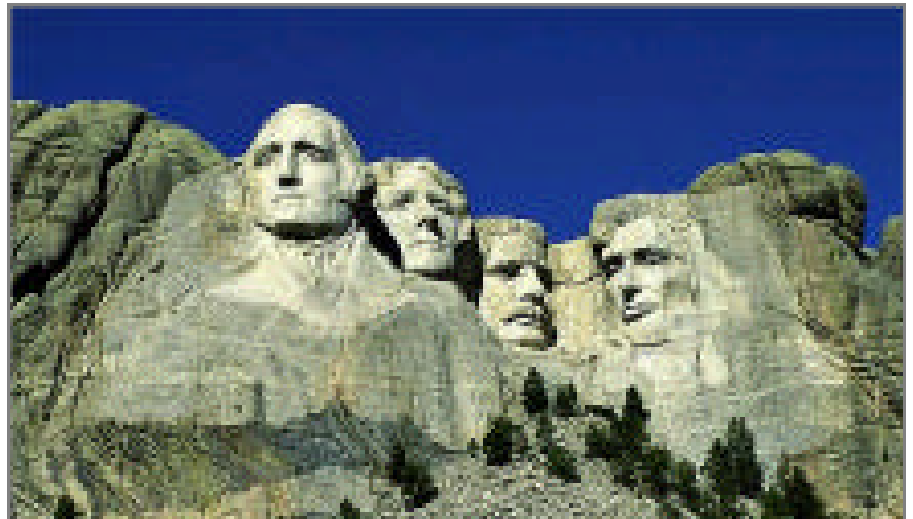
These letters, addressed simply to "Mister President" and received by Jimmy Carter, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, respectively, illustrate Americans' readiness to criticize, praise or simply offer advice to their presidents.

Letters to the Oval Office, compiled by Dwight Young with an introduction by NBC News anchorman Brian Williams and published by the National Geographic Society, reproduces a sampling of letters addressed to the presidents over the past 216 years.

The editorial process was daunting: President Bush receives up to 100,000 letters each week. Nonetheless, this compilation of correspondence from the serious and sad to the frivolous and fun demonstrates how millions of Americans, and even citizens of other nations, perceive the president as approachable, interested, perhaps even friendly. It also underscores the confidence U.S. citizens have in their right to express their opinions freely.

This tradition dates back to George Washington, the first president of the United States (1789–1797), whose birthday the United States celebrates on the third Monday of each February. Eager to establish a precedent that the U.S. president is neither a king nor a nobleman, but merely first among equals, Washington rejected such titles as "Protector of Liberties," and "Your High Mightiness," an-

portance was dated August 28, 1864, from Annie Davis of Belair, Maryland, to Abraham Lincoln. Davis, a Maryland slave, had heard of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which ended slavery in the breakaway Confederate States of America. Maryland, however, had remained in the Union, leading to Davis' question: "you will please let me know if we are free .... I write to you for advice. please



**Borglum monumental sculpture of US presidents, Mt Rushmore National Memorial. South Dakota, USA**

nouncing that he would answer to no title save the plain "Mister President."

Washington's modesty set a crucial precedent and established the tenor of the relationship between the president and the citizens of the United States. Americans and non-Americans alike over the years have felt free to praise, criticize, complain to and request favors from the individual who answers to the unadorned title, "Mr. President."

Presidents have received correspondence on nearly every subject imaginable. One of particular im-

send me word this week or as soon as possible." Ultimately, Maryland slaves were emancipated in November 1864.

Not surprising, matters of war and peace supplied a frequent context for appeals to the president. In 1898, as the Spanish-American War approached, expert marksman Annie Oakley stood "ready to place a company of fifty lady sharpshooters" at William McKinley's disposal.

Thirty-five years later, French R. Massey of Childersburg, Alabama, also was eager to see action, but,

*(Continued on page 14)*



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## U.S. Citizens Fearlessly Communicate with Their Head of State . . .

*(Continued from page 13)*

as he wrote Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Mother and Dad will not sign the necessary papers to enlist ... so I appeal to you to lower the draft age to seventeen (17) as soon as possible." Ten-year-old Carolyn Weatherhogg, of Lincoln, Nebraska, whose surname was near the end of the English alphabet, was less enthusiastic: "I am sending in a suggestion," she wrote, "that is draft fathers alphabetically." Anticipating FDR's prompt response, Weatherhogg helpfully enclosed her telephone number.

Although these letters did not produce immediate presidential action, others changed the course of history. An August 2, 1939, letter from physicist Albert Einstein to Roosevelt warned that Nazi Germany likely was working toward "extremely powerful bombs of a new type." Einstein's letter helped spur the Manhattan Project, the top-secret effort that created the first atomic bomb.

### WIDE RANGE OF ADVICE, CRITICISM

Americans traditionally have felt free both to admonish their presidents and to offer practical advice. Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. demanded of President John F. Kennedy "your commitment to use everything within your constitutional power to enforce the desegregation orders of the courts." Kennedy also might have consulted with 12-year-old Leah Russell of Miami, who previously had advised Dwight D. Eisenhower to blindfold all schoolchildren regardless of race. "I think that all of them would have a lot of fun," she wrote, "and there wouldn't be any fights."

Both the informal tone -- sometimes sharp, sometimes chatty -- and the wide variety of subjects, many far outside the political issues of the day, demonstrate Americans' presumed intimacy with their presidents. When Lyndon B. Johnson was photographed lifting a beagle by the ears, the Texas Humane Federation was quick to rebuke him: "Every Texan should know what the ears on a dog are for -- they are not handles, they are to hear with."

A Carteret, New Jersey, second-grader felt that Harry S. Truman would want to know that his class raised \$20.60 for the March of Dimes by selling hot chocolate and cookies. The 1958 drafting into military service of the popular singer Elvis Presley inspired a protest from three Montana youngsters to President Eisenhower: "We think it's enough to send Elvis Presley in the Army, but if you cut his sideburns off, we will just die!" (The sideburns grew back; the youngsters presumably survived.)

One need not be an American to write a U.S. president. In November 1940, for instance, "My good friend Roosvelt [sic]" received a plea from 12-year-old Fidel Castro of Santiago, Cuba. "I don't know very English, but I know as much as write to you," the future dictator began. "If you like, give me a ten dollar bill green American, in the letter, because ... I would like to have one of them."

### PRESIDENTIAL RESPONSES

Sometimes, the president writes back. On April 18, 1984, seventh-grade student Andy Smith of Irmo, South Carolina, sought help from

Ronald Reagan. "Today my mother declared my bedroom a disaster area. I would like to request federal funds to hire a crew to clean up my room. I am prepared to provide the initial funds if you will provide matching funds for this project."

Smith likely was stunned to receive a yellow legal sheet bearing Reagan's handwritten reply. After noting a technical difficulty -- only the authority declaring the disaster, in this case Smith's mother, was authorized to seek federal funds -- the president suggested the young man investigate the administration's private-sector initiative program, which called for solving local problems through volunteerism.

These and millions of other letters to American presidents are the property not of the presidents themselves, but of the American people. They are housed at the National Archives in Washington and at the individual presidential libraries throughout the nation, where any member of the public may inspect them.

Today's Americans exercise with relish the freedom to write, fax, or e-mail the White House in large part because of George Washington, the man who would accept no title other than "Mister President."

*(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦*

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## State's Hughes Praises "Citizen Diplomats"

By Michael Jay Friedman  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes promised a renewed commitment to reach out to audiences around the world, and to engage in conversations about democracy, freedom and the rule of law.

Addressing the annual meeting of the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV) on February 16 in Washington, Hughes described person-to-person exchanges as the most effective, most successful public diplomacy tool, and citizen diplomats as the United States' most valuable assets in the ongoing global contest of ideas and values.

The under secretary asserted that in an era of readily available information, public diplomacy must focus on individuals with the potential to wield wide influence in their societies, among them journalists, teachers and religious leaders.

Hughes described for the NCIV representatives several Bush administration initiatives to so target public diplomacy, including the Edward R. Murrow Journalism Program (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2005/Dec/14-677471.html>), a new public-private partner-

ship that will enable up to 100 foreign journalists to study and examine U.S. journalistic practices, the Rice-Chertoff Initiative (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jan/19-941422.html>) to streamline the student visa process, and the National Security Language Initiative (<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/>



[Archive/2006/Jan/06-841144.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jan/06-841144.html)) to expand the number of American speakers of critical-need foreign languages.

Hughes' audience included representatives from more than 90 U.S. community-based organizations that coordinate local programming for the International Visitor Leader-

ship Program (IVLP), managed by the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Each year, IVLP brings to the United States about 4,000 potential or established foreign opinion makers. Among the program alumni who participated during their youth are British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Afghan President Hamid Karzi, and former Egyptian, Indian and South African leaders Anwar Sadat, Indira Gandhi and F. W. deKlerk.

Host communities represented at the annual meeting included Minot, North Dakota, home of the Scandinavian Heritage Park, and High Point, North Carolina, a stop on the Underground Railroad, an informal secret transportation network that spirited 19th century African-American slaves northward to freedom.

For more information about the IVLP, see the State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs International Visitor Leadership Program (<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/ivp/>) Web site.

*(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦*

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## U.S. Wants Strong Manager To Lead United Nations

By Judy Aita  
Washington File United Nations  
Correspondent

United Nations -- In selecting the next secretary-general of the United Nations, the United States wants someone with extensive management experience, U.S. Ambassador John Bolton says.

Kofi Annan's second term as secretary-general will end December 31, and the search for his successor, as well as campaigning for the job, already has begun.

Bolton, who is president of the Security Council for February, has begun consultations with the other 14 members on how the secretary-general selection process should begin. The ambassador has said in several press interviews that he would like to see the selection completed by September to allow the incoming secretary-general a transition period.

The U.N. Charter provides little help on how the organization's leader should be selected. It says simply that the secretary-general "shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council." With the selection process being initiated in the Security Council, the successful candidate needs the approval of all five permanent members of the Security Council -- China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and the United States -- which have veto power in the council.

Talking with journalists after the traditional monthly Security Council lunch with the secretary-general February 16, Bolton said that council members "believe that the

selection of the next secretary-general is probably the most important decision we have to make this year as a membership."

"Obviously the secretary-general has to have political skills, but the [U.S.] view is that the management question is far and away the most important qualification," the ambassador said.



The United States feels that the next secretary-general "should be somebody who has extensive experience in management, particularly somebody who might be able to lead a major reform effort on a range of activities at the U.N. both on the management side, procurement, budgeting, personnel, and on the substantive side as well," Bolton continued. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=January&x=20060124192100eai-fas0.4770471&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>).)

The United States has made no decision on which candidates to support, he added.

While identifying the secretary-general as the chief administrative

officer, the U.N. Charter also gives him the responsibility of bringing to the attention of the Security Council "any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security." But no criteria or qualifications are mentioned.

With the lack of guidelines some traditions have developed over the years, including one that sets out a principle of geographic rotation. Some diplomats say that means the next secretary-general should be from Asia. Another agreement is that no secretary-general should come from one of the five Security Council permanent member nations, often referred to as the "P-5."

Bolton adheres to the so called P-5 convention, describing the unwritten rule that has existed since the beginning of the United Nations: The P-5 serve on all standing bodies of the United Nations that they want to serve on, in exchange for the P-5 never seeking chairmanship of any bodies or a citizen of those countries standing for election as secretary-general.

Bolton said that he does not accept the principle of geographic rotation, but the "P-5 convention" is "near and dear to my heart."

"It is our view that we should pick the best qualified person, whatever region of the world that person comes from," he said.

"In fact, if you look at the evidence there is no principle of geographic rotation in actual practice. There are five regional groups at the U.N. . . . Western Europe has had three secretaries

*(Continued on page 18)*

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## Committee to Protect Journalists Releases Annual Report on Attacks



By Vince Crawley  
Washington File United Nations  
Correspondent

Washington -- The Internet and international radio broadcasts play important roles in providing news to citizens of countries where governments limit press freedom, an independent media group said as it released its annual report on attacks against journalists.

"From Iraq to China, from Uzbekistan to Zimbabwe, 2005 was another terrible year for journalism in much of the world," the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said in its report, *Attacks on the Press in 2005*, released February 14.

"By CPJ's count, more than 100 journalists were killed doing their jobs over the past two years, the deadliest such period in a decade. Twenty-four countries jailed 125 journalists in 2005, figures that reflect increases from the previous year," the organization said in a press release.

CPJ, which is based in New York, is a nonprofit nongovernmental organization that receives its funding from private and corporate donations.

Alex Lupis, CPJ's Europe and Central Asia program coordinator, met with reporters during a February 15 roundtable at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Washington, saying that there were some positive, as well as troubling, developments in 2005.

"More and more journalists are turning to the Internet," said Lupis, who had just returned from Russia and Belarus. The Internet is "harder to regulate" and doesn't require a printing press or costly distribution routes, he said.

But "that freedom of the Internet may change," Lupis added. The governments of Russia and Belarus have suggested they may want to update their media laws to regulate the Internet. But even if such laws were enacted, he said, it is unclear how or if they would be enforceable.

Internet cafés are coming under growing government scrutiny in countries that stifle press freedom, he said, noting that he has heard reports of authorities requiring Internet users to register before going online and of Internet café staff walking around to monitor computer use visually.

Belarus in particular has a poor record of press freedom, and behaves more like the Central Asian republics of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan than like a central European country bordering the European Union, Lupis said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Dec/15-720756.html>).)

In Belarus, "clearly the biggest

problem now is bureaucratic obstruction to distribution," he said. Authorities are placing economic pressure on news operations, limiting their advertising base and stifling circulation. For example, Lupis said, the post office refuses to distribute papers to paid subscribers. "The government wants to be able to say, 'Look, we didn't shut them down; they shut down on their own,'" he said.

International pressure does appear to bring results, Lupis said. In Belarus, he was told that in the late 1990s, there were a number of reports of journalists who had "disappeared." This "actually has stopped or significantly decreased" due to a combination of local opposition and international pressure, he said.

Along with the growth of the Internet, "international broadcasting is becoming more and more important" in closed countries that have curtailed their own media, Lupis said. "It's one of the few remaining sources of information."

FM radio stations most easily can be targeted for closure, he said, because of the limited distance their signals can be transmitted. But shortwave broadcasts can have a tremendous effect because even in a remote town where only one person has access to a short-wave radio, that person can listen to a news broadcast, then relay the information to many other people.

Also, local journalists are "adapting" and "getting creative," Lupis said. "For every step of re-

*(Continued on page 18)*

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## Committee to Protect Journalists Releases Annual Report . . .

(Continued from page 17)

pression, there's always creative journalists trying to find a way to get around that."

More and more journalists are filing anonymous stories or writing under pseudonyms while posting their stories on out-of-country Web sites, he said. They also are reviving a Soviet-era practice of typing and printing out individual copies of news stories, which are circulated privately by hand to members of small, trusted groups.

RFE/RL is funded by the U.S. government, but Lupis expressed independent views.

CPJ is sometimes critical of U.S. government media policies. For example, Lupis

questioned whether all countries are being held to equal scrutiny by the U.S. government. On the other hand, he said, individual U.S. Embassy staffs have been personally involved in press-freedom issues.

For instance, in one Central Asian country, when authorities detained a journalist arriving at the main airport, a U.S. diplomat went to the airport and insisted on remaining until the situation was resolved. In another country, when authorities cut electrical power to an opposition newspaper, the U.S. Embassy

loaned its generators to the newspaper so it could keep publishing, Lupis said.

< i> Attacks on the Press in 2005 ([http://www.cpj.org/attacks05/pages05/aop05\\_release.html](http://www.cpj.org/attacks05/pages05/aop05_release.html)) is available on the Committee to Protect Journalists Web site.

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## U.S. Wants Strong Manager To Lead United Nations . . .

(Continued from page 16)

general, Latin America has had one, Africa has had two, Asia has had one, and the Eastern European group hasn't had one at all."

If there were geographic rotation, Bolton pointed out, "surely fairness dictates that before one group goes to two, another group at least gets one."

If there is geographic rotation, Bolton asked journalists, "do you believe in gender rotation?"

"There never has been a woman secretary-general," the ambassador said. "If the best qualified person is a woman, we'll be pleased to support her."

Previous secretaries-general include: Trygve Lie of Norway (1946-1952); Dag Hammarskjöld of Sweden (1953-1961); U Thant of Burma (1961-1971); Kurt Waldheim of Austria (1972-1981); Javier Perez de Cuellar of Peru (1982-1991) and Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Egypt (1992-1996). Annan of Ghana began his first tem

in 1997.

For additional information see United States and U.N. Reform ([http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international\\_security/UNGA\\_2005.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/UNGA_2005.html)).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦



## U.S. Signs Protocols To Combat Terror on the High Seas

The United States has signed two new agreements to combat terrorism and crime in international waters and to curb the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

The U.S. ambassador to the United Kingdom, Robert Holmes Tuttle, signed on behalf of the United States two treaties augmenting the U.N. Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA), according to a February 17 State Department announcement.

The new agreements, negotiated over a three-year period, will create a new international framework for boarding vessels and for interdiction of dangerous individuals and deadly cargos. The United States is urging other SUA parties to sign and ratify the two new protocols as soon as possible.

SUA originally was adopted in response to the 1985 terrorist hijacking of the Italian-flag cruise ship Achille Lauro, which resulted in the murder of a disabled American passenger.

In the wake of September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the United States has led an effort in the International Maritime Organization to strengthen further existing agreements as part of the global effort against terrorism. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Sep/12-44144.html>).)

The State Department said that

the new agreements will strengthen international cooperation against the use of ships to undertake criminal activities or terrorist attacks, transport terrorists or smuggle WMD or related cargo. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Oct/28-980286.html>).)



The following is the text of the State Department announcement:  
(begin text)

### MEDIA NOTE

U.S. Signs the Protocols to the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA)

Today, Ambassador to the United Kingdom Robert Holmes Tuttle signed on behalf of the United States two treaties amending the U.N. Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA) and its related protocol on Fixed Platforms. After September 11, the international community,

recognizing the urgent need for a more effective international regime to combat maritime terrorism, asked the United States to lead the effort to update the SUA Convention and Fixed Platform Protocol. These treaties were originally adopted in response to the 1985 hijacking of the Italian-flag cruise ship Achille Lauro and the murder of an American passenger.

After more than three years of intensive negotiations in the International Maritime Organization, parties adopted the new Protocols establishing important new international terrorist crimes and significantly strengthening our tools to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

The treaties create an international criminal framework for combating, on the high seas, the use of a ship to undertake a terrorist attack or to transport terrorists or cargo intended for use in weapons of mass destruction programs. They also create a new international framework for boarding ships carrying items of proliferation concern and for interdiction of the items.

The new Protocols, when they enter into force, will add to the 12 already existing U.N. counterterrorism conventions and will be an important tool in the worldwide fight against terrorism and proliferation.

We strongly encourage all Parties to the SUA to sign and ratify the two new Protocols as quickly as possible. ♦

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## Pace of Bird Flu Spread Accelerating

By Charlene Porter  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The spread of the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus has affected more countries in the month of February than in any similar period in the more than two-year-old epidemic.

The lethal H5N1 virus was detected in February in 13 new countries on three continents.

The World Health Organization (WHO) lists the nations in the order of their reports of bird flu: Iraq, Nigeria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Iran, Austria, Germany, Egypt, India and France.

Wild dead birds also have been found in Hungary, Croatia, Slovakia and Bosnia in recent days. Tests are under way to determine if H5N1 caused the deaths of animals in those nations.

A February 21 WHO assessment of the recent spread notes significant differences in the way the disease is appearing in the various countries.

In some places, the virus has shown itself in the corpses of wild dead birds found in rural waters. In other places, it has appeared in domestic or backyard flocks.

"In Egypt, outbreaks in domestic poultry have now been confirmed in 10 governorates [administrative

divisions]; deaths have also been reported in exotic zoo birds," said the WHO statement. "In Iraq, presence of the virus in birds was found only after the country confirmed its first human case."

A list compiled by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes 27 nations where the disease has been detected since its emergence in late 2003. This account does not in-

The Geneva-based agency underscores that H5N1 remains an animal disease, as it is being seen now, and has not undergone a genetic mutation that would allow it to become easily transmitted among humans.

"Human infection remains a rare event," WHO reports in a statement assessing the genetic shift of H5N1, and debunking media

speculation that the virus is becoming a greater threat to humans.

Over two years, WHO has confirmed 170 human cases of illness caused by H5N1, 92 of those fatal.

### CONTAINMENT

As international awareness has risen with the spread of avian influenza over the past year, governments are focusing their attention on containment activities to prevent the spread of the virus after detection in a

given area.

That process is unfolding in different ways as this dangerous form of bird flu has been discovered in countries for the first time.

The European Commission adopted a policy February 17 to implement protection measures on the appearance of the virus in member states.



Chickens are caged in a shop in Cairo, Egypt in this October 30, 2005 file photo. Egypt has found its first cases of H5N1 bird flu and is working with the World Health Organization (WHO) to prevent the deadly virus spreading, the government said on February 17, 2006.

REUTERS/Tara Todras-Whitehill/Files

clude nations in which H5N1 has not been definitively confirmed, meaning the total number of nations with confirmed cases of bird flu could rise again within days.

Of the nations newly detecting the disease in February, Iraq is the only one to report a human case of H5N1 infection, WHO says. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jan/30-429257.html>).)

(Continued on page 22)

## Biosecurity Urged as Bird Flu Spreads

By Charlene Porter  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – A potentially deadly form of avian influenza makes its appearance in a sweep of new countries over the last week, and prompts a new round of questions: How does it happen? What do we do?

Nigeria reported its first case among domestic poultry February 8, the first confirmation of the H5N1 virus in Africa. By February 17 news reports cited positive confirmation of the virus in both domestic and wild birds in various regions of Egypt.

To the north of Africa, increasing numbers of European nations also have detected the virus mostly among wild fowl. Wild bird migrations have been cited frequently as bringing the disease out of Southeast Asia, west through Central Asia, further west to Eastern Europe and now Western Europe with reports from Germany, Austria, Denmark and France in recent days.

Six months ago when the disease made its first steps on this cross continental odyssey, wildlife scientists cautioned against assumptions that the virus was carried by migrating flocks. Influenza viruses are just as capable of catching rides in human travels, carried by birds bought and sold in agricultural trade, or surviving in the mud splattered on the trucks that carries them.

More evidence of the human role in transmission of the avian virus

came from Nigeria the week of February 12. Agriculture Minister Adamu Bello acknowledged that poultry is being imported everyday, legally and illegally, from as far away as China.



**An farm worker tries to tie the legs of dead ostriches suspected of having bird flu virus to be buried inside the Sambawa farms where the Nigerian first bird flu case was noticed in Jaji about 40km from Kaduna, Nigeria, 02/11/06 Saturday. (AP Photo/George Osodi)**

Nigerians may be unable to ascertain precisely how the H5N1 virus traveled all the way from East Asia to sicken their birds, but they did not hesitate in deciding what to do. More than 60,000 birds have been destroyed in Kano and Kaduna states where the disease appeared, according to reports filed with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is advocating improved biosecurity to prevent a wider spread of disease through Africa.

"The highly pathogenic avian influenza virus poses a very serious

threat to animal health in West Africa," said Joseph Domenech, FAO's chief veterinary officer. In a February 17 statement. "If a poultry epidemic should develop beyond the boundaries of Nigeria the

effects would be disastrous for the livelihoods and the food security of millions of people."

Domenech spoke from Nigeria where he is working with an international team to help contain the H5N1 outbreak. Experts from the U.S. government also are contributing to that effort, and have shipped in specialized equipment to assist in the operations. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Feb/13-184848.html>).)

Amidst growing concern about the spreading infection, wildlife advocates are attempting to deflect these accusations from migratory

flocks.

"Globalization has turned the chicken into the world's number one migratory bird species," said Leon Bennun, director of science of BirdLife International, a British-based partnership of conservation groups. "Movements of chickens around the world take place 365 days a year, unlike the seasonal migrations of wild birds. It is important that strict biosecurity measures are imposed to stop further spread not only within Nigeria but also to neighboring countries."

But the spread of the disease seems to be moving faster than ever in recent weeks. Iran was

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## Biosecurity Urged as Bird Flu Spreads . . .

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another of those nations that reported spotting the disease in domestic animals to the OIE in the second week of February.

Neighboring Iraq first reported human cases of avian influenza in late January, the seventh nation to do so. The World Health Organization (WHO) verified February 17 that the January death of a 39-year-old man was caused by H5N1. He was the uncle of a girl whose death – also in January -- previously was attributed to this highly pathogenic form of influenza. Both victims were known to have contact with sick, domestic birds, so this case does not indicate that the virus has developed the capability for easy transmission between humans. If the virus does make that mutation, global pandemic influenza could result.

WHO now cites 91 deaths from

avian influenza with a total of 169 infections. Ongoing analysis of suspected cases could soon push that total case count to 200.

The U.S. government is pursuing a variety of initiatives to avert an influenza pandemic. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Feb/06-552151.html>)).

For additional information on the disease and efforts to combat it, see Bird Flu ([http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/bird\\_flu.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/bird_flu.html)).

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## Pace of Bird Flu Spread Accelerating . . .

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The measures call for the establishment of a 3-kilometer-high risk area around each outbreak, to be surrounded by a surveillance zone extending to 10 kilometers from the outbreak site.

Inside the smaller protection zone, poultry must be kept indoors and its movement is banned except transport directly to a slaughterhouse.

Inside the entire surveillance zone, biosecurity measures must be strengthened on all farms, hunting of wild birds is banned, and disease-awareness programs must be undertaken to explain the risks to everyone inside the zone.

Boosting that awareness is a

shortcoming in containment efforts being undertaken in Nigeria, according to a report from an international investigatory team sent to Nigeria after its first report of disease in domestic flocks February 8.

Experts from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) report "little awareness among the population regarding the risks of avian influenza and the protective measures that should be taken."

The technical team also cited shortcomings in the implementation of basic control measures, such as restriction of animal movements and closing of poultry markets.

The OIE-FAO team did find a fairly strong veterinary service in place to contend with the animal disease that has caused the death or destruction of more than 40,000 domestic birds so far.

Some 800 veterinarians and 7,000 technicians are available in Nigeria to cope with the outbreak.

Information on mutations in the H5N1 virus ([http://www.who.int/csr/2006\\_02\\_20/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/2006_02_20/en/index.html)) is available on the WHO Web site.

For additional information on the disease and efforts to combat it, see Bird Flu ([http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/bird\\_flu.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/bird_flu.html)).

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